

More than sixty years have sped by since those first days in elementary school when the future Camas (WA) High School Class of 1942 embarked on a lifelong adventure of learning. Can we agree with a recent bestseller that "we learned all we needed to learn in kindergarten?" ⁵ I think not; see Figure 2 for a view of a parabola of learning. From that first day in old Central School, we have now experienced some sixty-two years of additional learning by experience, technical training, on-the-job-training and formal pursuits of higher education. Each stage of learning development (that which we know) has only served to widen the great unknown (that which we don't know). If we take a slice of the parabola in Figure 2 at say, age six, when we began elementary school, the lower surface of the exposed parabola -- denoting what we have already learned -- will always be smaller than the upper portion of the parabola (things to be learned). At age eighteen, as we graduated from high school, we note we have learned a great deal in twelve years; we have mastered a much greater volume of the parabola. Everything we now know is below our "eighteen-year-old slice", but the parabola always gets larger, so everything above our "eighteen-year-old-slice" represents an ever-enlarging volume of knowledge we don't know. The conclusion has to be that the more we learn, the more we expose ourselves to things we don't know. The neighborhood dunce who says "There isn't very much I don't know about that" is being painfully correct; he knows very little about anything and has exhausted his ability to see the widened area of learning yet to be learned. One supposes that an Albert Einstein never stopped learning because each learning advance he gave to physics, for example, only exposed whole new fields of physical unknowns. By 1992 our average age will be 68; 1942 graduates have now learned a vast amount compared with the six-year-old slice of the parabola; we now know that the ever-enlarging parabola offers an ever-widening surface of the unknown -- the things we don't know. The older people I alluded to earlier who early on in our learning experience reached out to give us a hand were the magnificent teachers of the 1930's and 1940's; especially those that I now remember.

Miss Romig, venerable disciplinarian of First Graders in our humble first day opinions, introduced the simple necessity of classroom discipline. The proper use of paste pots, the art one could produce with crayons, the printed language and how to ask to leave the room (one finger or two fingers), safety first rules when using scissors and how to respond to a fire drill -- in all these matters, Miss Romig loomed large in our daily routine. She alone could designate who would be the lucky boy to help the prettiest girl in the class wash the blackboards and clean the erasers. Miss Romig was followed by Miss Ohmig as my Second Grade teacher. Half of the class were sent to Miss Roffler's portion of second grade. Miss (continued)

⁵ Everything I Needed to Know I Learned In Kindergarten
by author Robert Fulghum.